

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM IN ITS ECOLOGICAL SETTING

THE PROBLEM

AT a joint meeting of the Royal Anthropological Institute and the International African Institute in 1948, Gluckman said: 'Many District Officers have described the village headman as the invaluable Non-Commissioned Officer of native administration. Yet despite various references in earlier literature to his important political, legal and ritual responsibility for his dependants, there has not yet been an adequate appreciation of his key position in the social structure.'¹

In this essay, I have tried to examine this problem in relation to one of the tribal groups in British Central Africa. Gluckman pointed out that one fact among the diverse characteristics of Central African peoples is constant—people live in villages. This was observed by the earliest travellers in the region, who gave the English word 'village' to the groupings of huts they saw, and so this important point passed imperceptibly into the descriptions of the social organization of the peoples. Yet, perhaps because of its very obviousness, it is an interesting fact that no studies have been made of the position of the village as such in the social structure. It is clear that Lozi villages² and villages along the Luapula River, where the environment sets a stamp on the village composition,³ are different from Nyakyusa villages where boys of one age-grade strike out to found a new village,⁴ or from Ngöni villages where a diversified set of kinsmen

¹ Gluckman, M., Mitchell, J. C., and Barnes, J. A., 'The Village Headman in British Central Africa', *Africa*, xix, 2 (April 1949), 89-106.

² Gluckman, M., *The Economy of the Central Barotse Plain*, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper, No. 7 (1941), and his contribution to the symposium, *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa*, eds. Colson, E., and Gluckman, M., Oxford University Press for the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (London, 1951).

³ Cunison, I., *Kinship and Local Organization on the Luapula*, Communication from the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, No. V (Livingstone, 1950).

⁴ Wilson, G., 'An Introduction to Nyakyusa Society', *Bantu Studies*, x, 3 (1936), and Wilson, M., *Good Company*, Oxford University Press for the International African Institute (London, 1951).

The Yao Village

●12/ adhere to a headman whose position is fixed in an historically
62/ determined hierarchy.¹ Yet it stands the test of observation that
there are in all tribes of this region small concentrated settlements
of people who look upon themselves as groups, and who play
an important part in the political activities of the community.

In my analysis of the social structure of the Yao, I have taken
the village and tried to see it as a unit in a larger field of political
relations. I have also tried to see it as a unit in itself, internally
differentiated. I have taken the district under the jurisdiction
of a Native Authority as the whole, the universe, which is to be
resolved into parts. Before the British forces subjugated the
tribes of Nyasaland, there had been a period of intensive tribal
movement and intertribal warfare. Some groups had gathered
around successful warriors and maintained their identity; others
had been broken and dissolved by stronger forces. The British
conquest ended the period of military adjustment, and for ad-
ministrative purposes the country was divided into districts.
Within these districts some adherents gathered around their
former leaders while others preferred to remain where they were.
Tribes such as the Nyanja, who were the original inhabitants,
remained in residence; newcomers such as the Lomwe immi-
grated from Portuguese East Africa. But when the Administra-
tion later officially recognized chiefs in these districts it was the
successful Yao invaders who were recognized and not the
indigenous Nyanja or immigrant Lomwe.

12/ While the war-making units of the Yao—the tribal groups
62/ under numerous chieftains—were broken up by the British forces,
the smaller component units, the villages, survived. From early
records and from the tales told by old men who can still remember
something of the pre-White days, we know that the people have
always lived in villages, though their structure has probably
changed since those days. The villages were far and away the
most important social units within any of the chiefdoms. The
'village' was and still is a key concept in Yao thought. I shall
demonstrate later that it was the smallest group acting in the
political field. At the same time it was, and still is, the field in
which kinship was most significant. This is why I have taken

¹ Barnes, J. A., in his essay 'The Fort Jameson Ngoni', *Seven Tribes, and Politics in a Changing Society*, Oxford University Press for the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (Cape Town, 1954).

The Problem in its Ecological Setting

3

the village as the fundamental unit in my description of Yao social structure. I have tried to describe other social groups in a village context: for example, how lineages and families make up the village; how the religious congregations, particularly the Moslems, still organize their relationships on a village basis; and so on.

The position of the village in the social structure therefore has to be analysed from two aspects. Firstly, it is a unit within an organized whole—the chiefdom. Secondly, the village itself is a whole, with its own structure and morphology. Dividing the total structure into two sections and considering the village both as a part of a whole and as itself an organized whole, simplifies description. In fact, there is one continuum of social relationships, and the internal organization of a village reflects its position in the total structure. For example the fission of a matrilineage is significant in both the fields of kinship and politics, since through it kinsmen separate and found new villages.

Throughout this essay I use the word 'village' to mean both a concentration of huts and a social group. The two ideas are inseparable in Yao thought and it will be clear from the context of the sentence which meaning I intend. A word of warning is necessary here for those who are familiar with Administrative terminology in Nyasaland. The Administrative use of the word 'village' is different from mine. To me a village is a discrete cluster of huts occupied by a group of kinsmen who recognize their own identity against similar groups. The Administration has for its own purposes classified the population of each district into 'villages' under remunerated 'village headmen'. Very frequently these do not fall directly within the scope of this study. Wherever I refer to the villages in the Administrative sense I shall use the phrase 'Administrative village'; otherwise the word 'village' refers to the indigenous social group which I have defined.

In order to burden the reader with as few strange-sounding names as possible, and to spare him the task of learning many general village backgrounds, I have tried as far as possible to draw my illustrations from two villages, Ali Kasunka and Cikoja.¹

¹ These names and the names of most of the characters in this book, except those of the well-known chiefs, are fictitious, so that their anonymity might be preserved.

The Yao Village

121 But I have used illustrative material from other villages where it was more complete or less confusing. In Appendices, I set out genealogies, hut censuses, and plans, of the two villages. In the text I use reference numbers in these genealogies, by generation and position in generations, to identify people.

It is necessary to select illustrations because the structural uniformities I wish to describe are often hidden by the idiosyncrasies of particular examples. The general principles of social structure, as I present them here, have been abstracted from my observations over a period of two years, not only in Cikoja and Ali Kasunka villages, but in many others in the Machinga area. I present my illustrations not with any belief that they prove my analysis, but only to help the reader set the principles I describe in the reality of Yao life.

THE FIELD WORK

123 I spent the first two weeks of my stay in Nyasaland talking over my proposed field work with the Administrative officers of the Nyasaland Government. The Provincial Commissioner suggested that I should do a round trip of the Yao area with the District Commissioner at Zomba. After this tour, in consultation with Chief Kawinga and the District Commissioner, I decided that the best place for me to start would be in Chief Chiwalo's area. The District Commissioner then took me to Chiwalo who indicated a site in his court-village where I could pitch my tent.

124 For the first week I held meetings with the chief and some of the older men of the vicinity and spent most of my time making notes on material culture, 'customs' and history. On the first page of my notes I find that there is a good description of Yao beliefs in sorcery, all described as if it were in the past: a full year was to pass before my informants were prepared to admit that these beliefs were still held. After a week or two of this
123 general activity I decided to try my first village census. The
125 results were hardly encouraging. Often when villagers knew
203 I was coming they slipped away into the bush. Those who were left frequently refused steadfastly to answer my questions. Many rumours arose to explain my presence. I heard, for example, that I had been sent by the Government to record the names of those to be taken away as soldiers for the next

[293]

AN ESTIMATE OF FERTILITY IN SOME YAO HAMLETS IN LIWONDE DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN NYASALAND¹

J. CLYDE MITCHELL

I. INTRODUCTION

KUCZYNSKI has drawn attention to the deplorable incompleteness of censuses of colonial populations.² In order to make estimates of population trends among non-literate peoples, therefore, we have to rely on the analysis of samples drawn at random from the population as a whole.³ The difficulties to be surmounted even for so limited an objective are considerable.

The first and most difficult problem is that of securing what may be considered a statistically random sample. Often there are not even accurate maps of the areas to be surveyed, and sometimes Administrative records of such larger units as villages are inaccurate. The universe from which the sample is to be drawn is thus often unmeasured and unknown. Even when this difficulty is overcome there are yet other practical problems to be solved. These may include factors such as climate, disease, inaccessibility of some areas, which militate against a successful survey.

However, most serious of all from the demographer's point of view is that much of the information that he wants is difficult to obtain from non-literate people. Usually there is some suspicion and reticence in giving information about numbers of people,⁴ and this implies that the investigator has first to gain the confidence of the people with whom he is working. Another set of difficulties is encountered because the people themselves cannot easily answer questions framed in concepts with which they are not familiar. Probably the most outstanding of these is the question of ages of individuals, since few, if any, non-literate people reckon age in years as we are accustomed to do. Recourse must therefore be had to some method of estimating age. This can be done in different ways, depending on the people studied. Thus, for example, some people have what are called age-regiments into which all members of the tribe are inducted periodically (about every five or six years in the case of the Tswana of the Bechuanaland Protectorate) when they reach adulthood. Where there are no such indigenous systems, a chronology of events may have to be resorted to, as was done in the survey upon which this paper is based.

¹ I am grateful to Dr. M. Fortes and Dr. M. Gluckman of the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford, to Mr. J. A. Barnes of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, and to Dr. E. H. Charles, Central Statistical Officer, Birmingham City Council, all of whom have read the draft of this paper and suggested some improvements. The responsibility for the calculations and the statements made in it is, however, entirely mine.

² R. R. Kuczynski, *Colonial Population*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs (1937). Part has been reprinted in *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, no. 2 (Dec. 1944), as 'Population Movements: The Contribution of Demography to the Study of Social Problems', pp. 18 ff.

³ Sonnabend draws attention to the value of such samples in I. Sonnabend, 'Demographic Samples in the Study of Backward and Primitive Populations', *South African Journal of Economics*, vol. II (Sept. 1954).

⁴ Some of the difficulties in conducting demographic surveys among non-literate peoples are recorded by Sami W. Dejam. In particular he recounts that after the Bedouins had agreed to give census information to the Palestine Administration they changed their minds and refused to do so when the Anglo-American Committee's report on Palestine was published. Sami W. Dejam, 'The Enumeration of the Beersheva Bedouins in May 1946', *Population Studies*, vol. I, no. 3 (Dec. 1947), p. 304.

194 AN ESTIMATE OF FERTILITY IN SOME YAO HAMLETS IN

121 Often there is some cultural obstruction to the giving of information of certain types. The Yao, for example, will not readily mention the names of deceased persons. Often young children or people who themselves had no children are completely forgotten. Many polygynous men cannot remember the number of children that they have fathered.

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121 Nevertheless, in spite of these and other similar difficulties, some investigators have been able to publish a certain amount of material bearing on the problem of the rate of increase of non-literate populations in Africa. All of them have been based on samples, though none of these could be considered statistically representative. Such studies in recent years include one in Southern Nigeria,¹ one from Tanganyika² based on a substantial sample of women, while M. Fortes has published some material on the Tallensi of the Gold Coast.³ Schapera, incidentally to a larger study, has published some material on the Tswana of Bechuanaland Protectorate.⁴

The analysis of the Yakó by Enid Charles and C. Daryll Forde was mainly concerned with the calculation of the male net reproduction-rate, while the Culwicks and Schapera calculated female net reproduction-rates. Fortes considered both the male and female net reproduction-rates. The Culwicks have so far presented the most complete analysis of this type of material but were not able to classify their material into five- or ten-year age-groups, though they did use a wider age classification. The Culwicks, Fortes, and Schapera have all used the number of girls born to women now past child-bearing as an estimate of the female gross reproduction-rate. There are objections to this procedure which are outlined below. ✓

121 In this paper an attempt is made to present in more detail some demographic material on an African non-literate people. The main object of the paper is to estimate the probable gross and net reproduction-rates prevailing at the moment in the areas studied. The data on which this paper is based were collected incidentally to a study of the social organization of the Yao people living in the Liwonde District of Nyasaland in Central Africa.⁵ In this study a number of typical hamlets, varying from 5 to 50 or more dwellings, were visited and genealogies of the residents recorded. In 20 of these hamlets further details were secured on points of demographic interest. Each census in a village took a day or two, and individual censuses were taken between November 1946 and March 1947. In this analysis of the material I have assumed that the survey was done at the end of 1946. The survey was conducted on a *de facto* and *de jure* basis in that the population who had slept in a hamlet the previous night was enumerated, but the mobility of the population is so high that usually it was necessary to consider a *de jure* count as constituting the true population of the village. The twenty hamlets studied were grouped in three areas, two in the area under N. A. Kawinga and one in N. A. Nyambi's area.

¹ Enid Charles and C. Daryll Forde, 'Notes on Some Population Data from a Southern Nigerian Village', *The Sociological Review*, vol. xxx, no. 2 (April 1952).

² A. T. and G. M. Culwick, 'A Study of Population in Uluwa, Tanganyika Territory', *The Sociological Review*, vol. xxx, no. 4 (1952), p. 365, and vol. xxxi (1953), no. 1, p. 25.

³ M. Fortes, 'A Note on the Fertility among the Tallensi of the Gold Coast', *The Sociological Review*,

vol. xxxv, nos. 4-5 (July-Oct. 1945).

⁴ I. Schapera, *Migrant Labour and Tribal Life*, London: Oxford University Press (1947), pp. 20 ff.

⁵ This study was conducted as part of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute's comparative study of the social organization of some Central African tribes. I am grateful to the Trustees of the Institute and to the Director, Dr. E. Colson, who have given me permission to publish this material.

LIWONDE DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN NYASALAND

191

They do not form a representative sample though they were casually selected for 125 study and are fairly well scattered in the district in which they are situated.

In all there were 762 men, women, and children normally resident in the hamlets. 162 This represents about 1.2 per cent. of the total population of the area. By normally resident, I mean that these people are considered to be members of the hamlets, and if they were absent, were away on only short visits of, say, about a month.

I have thus counted polygynists as normal members of the hamlets, but have taken 125 care to ensure that they were not included again if their second wives were in another hamlet of the groups studied. Men, women, and their children who had gone outside the area to seek work, for example, were not included.

The ages of all members of the population were estimated by relating the birth of the individual to some notable event, the date of which is known. In these hamlets it was always possible to find some old relative who could place the birth of younger people as occurring between notable events. After the two dates between which the birth occurred had been fixed, it was then possible to fix the date of birth more accurately by asking the older people to indicate the approximate size of the child at subsequent events, by picking out a suitably sized child in the village.

The following is the skeleton chronology used in this survey.

- 1870 Migration of Kawinga group from Kongwe Hill. 125
- 1881 First attack by the Makwangwana Angoni. 175
- 1884 Second attack by the Makwangwana Angoni.
- 1891 British attack on Mount Chikala, the stronghold of Kawinga.
- 1896 British attack on Mount Mangoche, the stronghold of Jalasi.
- 1901 Death of Kawinga of the Anzill.
- 1907 The departure of Mr. Hoare, Collector of Revenue, from the Chikala Station.
- 1908 Small-pox epidemic.
- 1911 Government regulations about the number of huts to a village (District Administration (Natives) Ordinance, 1911).
- 1914 Commencement of the First World War. This is a notable event because of the fighting in German East Africa, in which many Nyasaland African troops took part. Also many men were used as porters carrying war goods from the railhead to Fort Johnston on Lake Nyasa.
- 1918 End of First World War.
- 1919 Influenza epidemic.
- 1921 General famine. This is known locally as *sala sa Jim*, lit. 'the hunger of Jim'. Jim was an African Government clerk whose duty it was to dispense food to the starving populace.
- 1930 The coming of the famous *mwaka* witchfinders. These people, trading on the beliefs of the population, induced practically the entire people to drink a potion to protect themselves from witchcraft. It is a most memorable event in the history of the area.¹
- 1933 The introduction of Indirect Rule.
- 1940 The commencement of recruiting for the Second World War. The Liwonde district supplied a good proportion of men for the Army.
- 1946 End of the Second World War, i.e. the return of the soldiers.

The important thing about such a chronology is that the events should be deeply 121

¹ For details of this movement when it had proceeded to Northern Rhodesia, see A. I. Richards, 'A Modern Movement of Witchfinders', *Africa*, vol. viii (1931), pp. 624-61. 125

296 AN ESTIMATE OF FERTILITY IN SOME YAO HAMLETS IN

- 121 imposed on people's memories and remembered by most of the people. Thus it was desirable to find a useful reference date between 1930 and 1940. It might be thought that the death of King George V would be memorable. However, though all who were old enough at the time could remember the witchfinders, only a few could remember the death of King George.
- 125 This skeleton chronology was filled in by events of more local significance. For example, Kawinga's brick house was built in 1929, the present Nyambi succeeded in 1933, &c. In addition, in particular hamlets there were men who had been in the Army, or had been to work in South Africa or Southern Rhodesia. Usually they could recall the date of going and sometimes of return, though they may have lost count of the intervening years. Such dates were often useful points. A small minority had actually recorded the dates of birth and death of children.
- 805 In addition to this, it was possible to fix the ages of the young children by reference to harvests, since the Yao reckon two years in retrospect, 'last year' meaning before the last harvest and 'the year before last' meaning the period before the harvest before last. Before the year before last, all time is merely *kale-kale*, the only indication of the period being the pitch of the voice in which it is said or the presence or absence of an exclamation 'E!' before speaking.
- 125 Particular care was taken to secure the ages of women and the dates at which they had borne children. There was, as mentioned above, some reticence in mentioning the names of dead children, but this was usually met successfully by questioning the women's male relatives who were generally more communicative on these points.
- [128] In spite of the care taken to obtain this information, it was impossible to fix the ages of six women in the sample, and they have been excluded from the major part of the analysis. In addition, there were thirty-nine men who were not available for questioning. These were all adults, the husbands of women in the hamlets. The Yao are matrilineal and matrilocal, and men tend to spend much of their time away from the hamlet of their relatives-in-law. Since they are in many ways strangers in the hamlets no information could be obtained about them.
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E. THE GENERAL BACKGROUND TO FERTILITY

All the hamlets visited were occupied by members of the Yao tribe. The Yao are an Islamized people who achieved the questionable distinction of being efficient slave raiders at the end of the nineteenth century. They are a matrilineal and predominantly matrilocal people living in hamlets of from about 5 to 100 huts or more.

TABLE I. Age of Women at First Marriage

(582)

Age	Age of women at first marriage											Total	Median age at first marriage
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	Over 64		
Under 20	9	6	3	18	9	4	1	3	..	..	..	33	16.7
20-24	4	6	7	11	4	4	0	3	..	1	3	43	26.3
Over 24	..	0	1	3	0	3	1	0	..	1	..	23	28.6
Totals	13	12	11	32	21	11	2	6	..	2	3	121	27.0

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Acknowledgements are due to many African friends who have freely given me information, and especially to Mr. Bennett Malhekebe.

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The present Bantu population of the Shire Highlands in South Nyasaland consists of four major groups:

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1. The Nyanja tribe, the country's earliest known inhabitants, whose language is closely allied to that of the Sena and Tette people on the Zambesi and the Senga on the Loungwa, but whose origin is uncertain. In 1858 Livingstone found various branches of this tribe settled throughout South Nyasaland.

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2. The Yao tribe, numbers of whom between 1860 and 1870 were driven southwards from their home in Portuguese East Africa by the neighbouring Amakusa 'Walo. These fugitive Yao fell upon the unwelcome Nyanja, conquered and subjugated their chiefs, and finally settling among them, intermarried to a certain extent.

3. A sprinkling of Ngoni, that branch of the Zulu whose flight from Chaka, wanderings in East Africa and ultimate settlement in Nyasaland and Portuguese East Africa, are familiar history. In the Shire Highlands Ngoni are found only in small scattered groups, for their real home is the "Angoni Highlands" of central Nyasaland.

4. Recent immigrants from various tribes in Mozambique, given by Nyanja and Yao the indiscriminate name of "Lomwe", (i.e., possibly, "people from Lomwe Hill") or more rudely, "Nguru", (i.e. "people who speak indistinctly, like drunkards").

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This study was made in the district around Zomba and deals exclusively with the Nyanja and Yao TRIBES, WHO TALK PROPORTIONATE

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For the most profound influence comes from Europe. Modern large-scale economics engulfing primitive small-scale economics, legislation by Protectorate Government, contact with Christian Missions and with European ways of life and thought—these together are shaking Nyanja and Yao society to its foundations. Constructive elements they do, of course, contain, but rebuilding on the ruins has hardly begun. In order to understand the present with its problems and promises for the future, we must know something of the past; the traditional Nyanja and Yao relationship system is the key to this past which I would try here to put into your hands. It is not yet too late to grasp. The greatest changes began within living memory, and where village and family life has been revolutionized, relationship terms are still untouched. Hence, if we study the more conservative members of the tribes in the light of these terms, we should be able to piece together a fairly accurate outline picture of their original society. I make no attempt here to analyse in detail their relationship system; a study of the mutual responsibilities and interdependencies inherent in it, and the changes it is now undergoing, would require many years, and its results fill a large volume. This paper may, I hope, serve as an introduction to another's study, made before it is too late.

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Nyanja society differs from any modern European social group in these ways: it is matrilineal; it is matrilocal; by the traditional practice of bilateral cross-cousin marriage, (i.e. marriage to the daughter of one's mother's brother, or, equally, of one's father's sister) its ties of blood and affinity have become interdependent.

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Our English society, like that of the pure Nguni, is patrilineal, the child belonging primarily to its father's family and the son inheriting wealth, social status and sometimes political power from his father. The Nyanja child, on the other hand, belongs primarily to its mother's group; a boy inherits social and political status from his mother's brother, and a girl from her maternal grandmother. These relatives on the mother's side arrange the children's marriages and have throughout life more authority and

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RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE WAYAO.

By MARGARET SANDERSON,

Medical Officer, Hospital Protectorate.

Introductory.—Various writers have attempted to give English equivalents to the Yao terms denoting relationship, or have alluded to the outstanding features of the system, but I am not aware that anybody has hitherto worked out the whole system. 121

Although it is very similar to other classificatory systems, I feel that a description of it may not be quite valueless, more especially on account of the evolutionary changes that are taking place.

The Wayao are a Bantu tribe, sanguineous but not totemic, which until the middle of the last century inhabited that part of United Africa lying to the East of Lake Nyasa, particularly in the valleys of the Lajenda and Ruvuma rivers. Up to that time the tribe had not extended far from the area indicated except perhaps in a northerly direction, but owing to constant internecine war in their own territory the Yao then invaded and conquered a large part of the neighbouring territories, especially to the south, in what is now called Nyasaland. 131

I have said that the Wayao are not totemic, and that statement is correct at the present time. Opinions differ, however, as to how recent their loss of totemism is; though their initiation ceremonies are generally regarded as totemic, even there, in my opinion, the evidence is not conclusive, and there remains no suspicion of totemism outside these ceremonies. 141

It should be mentioned that Islam is much more prevalent among the Yao than among their neighbours, but its influence is not yet so deep-seated as greatly to change the pure tribal customs, except to a certain extent among the rising generation. 151

To facilitate description the relationships are given in tabular form, the relationship being given with reference to one man or woman. 161

In Table I, Column 1 describes the relationship, Column 2 gives either the nearest equivalent of the Yao term, or, if none, the actual term. Columns 3-6 give the various relations of the person named in Column 1, as they would be named by the man or woman under consideration. 171

For example, the brother of (x)'s father (Column 1) is regarded as (x)'s father (Column 2), the wife of (x)'s father's brother is (x)'s aunts (Column 3), their child is his "brother" or "sister" (Column 4), and so on (see Table I). 181

MASSACHUSETTS.—Relationships among the Wai'an.

575

The alternative term, *war*, common to nearly all Bantu languages, is usually reserved for "own father," but not always.

Lately, though the relationship is really always, the husbands of a man's "daughters" or "grand-daughters" are called *war*—in a complimentary sense, not of course in defining relationship.

The word always is rapidly falling into disuse, both for men, and in, nowadays, never used in speaking to a man of that relationship, though used freely as a mode of address to women.

Awar (or *awikulu-awaga*, -*war*, etc., "my, his mother") may be further defined as "great" or "little" in the same manner as *war*.

The parents of any *war* or *war*, and those of one's wife are called *awaga* ("grandparent"). Great-grandparents are specified as "father" or "mother of my grandfather (or mother)."

The head of a family is called *Likulu*, especially in proper—except for those suggestive of the obvious sense word as *Awaga*, "parent," which includes all "father" and "mother."

It is curious in this connection that a name for little girls in general, if one does not know their real name, is *awikulu*. All these words seem to be derived from *awikulu* ("here," "parent"), and refer, probably, either to actual or potential possession of offspring.

Awikulu are distinguished as "male" or "female" according as they belong to the father's or mother's side—irrespective of their own sex.

Conclusion.—The Yao nomenclature of relationships, bearing as it does the evidence of former group marriage, is, like other classificatory systems, gradually changing in conformity with the development of the race, so that it can be used to express consanguinity; Eriksen has, I believe, called attention to this process.

The Yao custom—now dying out—of lending one's wife to a visitor (usually a close friend) may be a remnant of ideas carried on from communal marriage, though such a privilege is never given to a relative.

In the same way a man who has had no children (a great stigma) may request his friend to help him—he will never ask a relative—and all of the three parties will keep the secret of the true paternity of any children resulting.

In many tribes the marriage of brother and sister, or a man with his sister's child, is permitted to compensate for the law by which a man's property goes to the son of a stranger, but nothing of the kind is allowed among the Yao. Indeed, they view any inordinate union with particular horror, and such must be very rare. I have heard of a case of a man committing incest with the idea that he would thereby become united with supernatural powers, but all he gained was extinction; in the old days he would have been burned.